

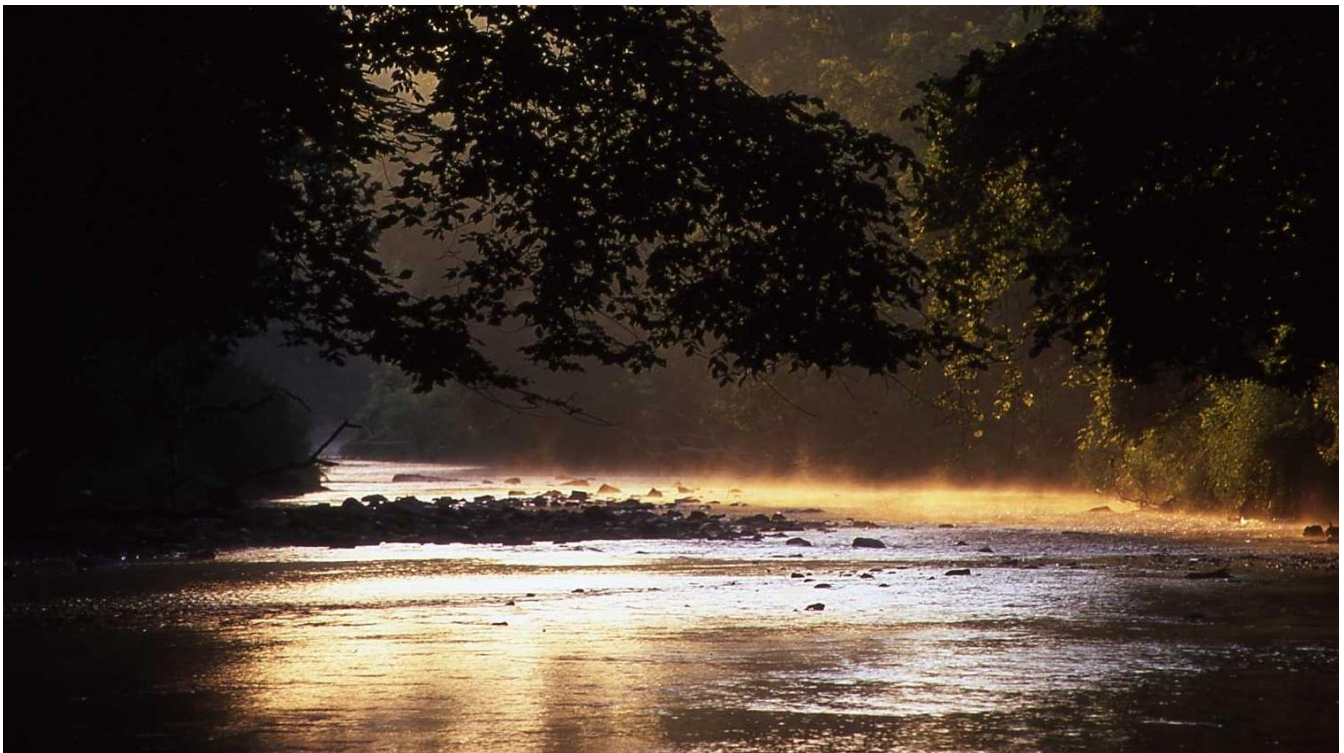
Cuyahoga Valley National Park

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service



Strategic Action Plan

2016 – 2021



January 2016

Introduction

Overview: Strategic Planning is an important process for any organization in order to set priorities and focus on the “wildly important”. Using the principles outlined in *The 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX): Achieving Your Willy Important Goals*, we started 2015 focusing our attention on the Wildly Important Goal (WIG) of increasing employee morale. We also spent the latter part of 2015 creating a Strategic Action Plan.

The time is right for a Strategic Action Plan with a focus on the Cuyahoga River Watershed. It will allow Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its partners the opportunity to highlight the importance of this key feature of the park’s enabling legislation. But this focus on the Cuyahoga River Watershed does not mean that our focus on the workforce team - NPS staff, partners, and volunteers - goes away.

Commitment Statement: In order to achieve the park’s Vision during this time of complex change and limited resources, we all must commit to changing how we work so that we function as one body, eagerly working among divisions, programs, and teams. This commitment requires that we continuously assess our actual capacity and let go of projects, programs, and processes that are not essential to our core values and long-term goals. Priority work will be determined based on its alignment with strategic goals using the following criteria:

Does the project, program, or activity:

- ✓ Achieve our enabling legislation/park fundamentals
- ✓ Align with our purpose and core values
- ✓ Support the 2021 Vision
- ✓ Consume manageable amounts of time, energy, and money
- ✓ Consider opportunities for resourcefulness to create capacity
- ✓ Have a champion within the organization who has the time and attention required

Moving Forward: As we institutionalize this Strategic Action Plan as a living document and practical tool for priority setting, problem solving, and bold thinking, we will:

- ✓ Set clear, achievable, measurable park-wide goals each year
- ✓ Set clear, achievable, measurable division goals that align with park goals each year
- ✓ Consider core values, park-wide goals, and execution of strategies during project planning, hiring, and individual performance evaluations

Ensuring Success: The success of the plan hinges on our collective ability to change our behavior, and ultimately change our culture. Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Be accountable and hold one another accountable
- ✓ Be willing to give and receive feedback
- ✓ Be transparent throughout the many steps to complete this Strategic Action Plan over the next five years.

With renewed discipline and rigor, we look forward to working with all stakeholders toward the implementation of this plan, so that together we can celebrate all successes as park successes.

Thank you to all park staff and partners who participated in the Strategic Action Plan process. It was a very collaborative effort in which everyone had a chance to contribute.

Craig Kenkel
Superintendent

Park Purpose

Purpose statements identify the specific reason for the establishment of a particular national park. They are crafted through a careful analysis of the enabling legislation and legislative history that influenced the development of a park. Cuyahoga Valley National Park's initial enabling legislation was passed and signed into law on December 27, 1974. The purpose statement in the enabling legislation reinforces the foundation for future park management, administration, and use decisions.

In recent years, through a facilitated process, many national parks have created Foundation Documents. Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its Partners completed its Foundation Document in 2013. A Foundation Document is intended to serve as the underlying guidance for all management and planning decisions at a national park. It describes the underpinnings and the core mission of a park. The following purpose statement was based on the review of park legislation, previous management documents, and discussion with park staff:

"The purpose of Cuyahoga Valley National Park is to preserve and protect for public use and enjoyment the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga River and its valley; to maintain the necessary recreational open space in connection with the urban environment; and to provide for the recreational and educational needs of the visiting public."



Core Values and Behaviors

Core Values are the park's enduring principles. They cannot be compromised without compromising the park's basic identity. Agreed upon and expected behaviors are listed under each Core Value.

Collaboration: We strive for each other's success.

- Invite people outside our normal work groups to participate.
- Welcome new ideas and perspectives.
- Strive for inclusive outcomes.
- Address conflict to find positive resolution.

Innovation: We challenge ourselves to think and act in new ways.

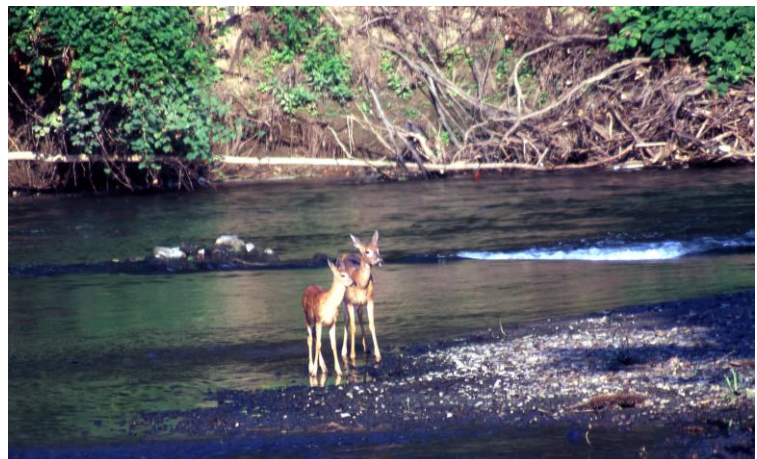
- Determine our goals.
- Seek out and implement new ways to do our work.
- Take calculated risks and support others to do the same.
- Regularly evaluate what is working and what is not (based on our goals).
- Improve what we do (based on our evaluation).

Tenacity: We accomplish things previously considered impossible.

- Ask the questions, "Why not?" "What will it take to get it done?"
- Respond to challenges as opportunities to excel.
- Do not give up.

Renewal: We pursue opportunities for restoration and recovery where others might not.

- Focus time and energy on what most improves our resources.
- Take ownership of our actions and learn how they affect our resources.
- Explore the potential in everything regardless of condition.
- Celebrate renewal and share it with others.



NPS Core Values

Cuyahoga Valley National Park's Core Values build on the Agency's Core Values.

Shared Stewardship

We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.

Excellence

We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.

Integrity

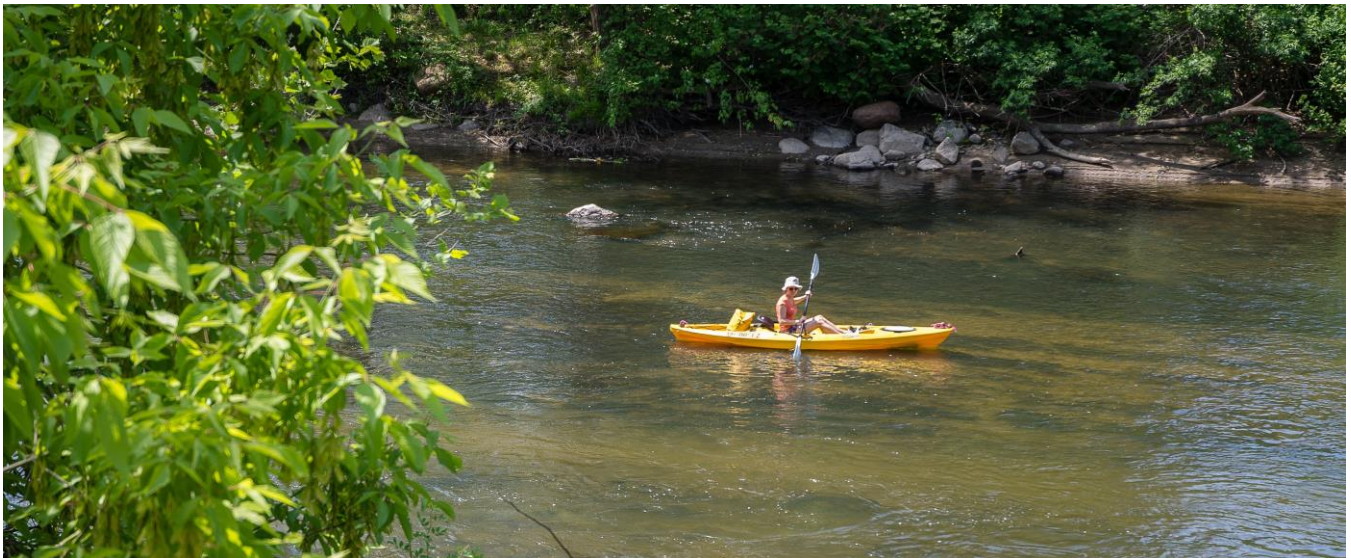
We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.

Tradition

We are proud of it, we learn from it, we are not bound by it.

Respect

We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.



Vision

Vision is a description of a desired future which is supported by various park teams.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park Vision

In 2021, the Cuyahoga River Watershed, its communities, and Cuyahoga Valley National Park are international symbols of human, urban, and ecosystem renewal.

Supporting Visions

The Resource Management team is a united force for the protection and restoration of the Cuyahoga River Watershed.

The Visitor and Resource Protection team is valued as proactive leaders in managing river use and watershed protection.

The Maintenance team is a champion and protector of the Cuyahoga River Watershed and its natural and cultural resources.

The Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services team is regarded as a powerful communicator of a compelling and unified message about the river's story in human, urban, and ecosystem renewal.



Victory

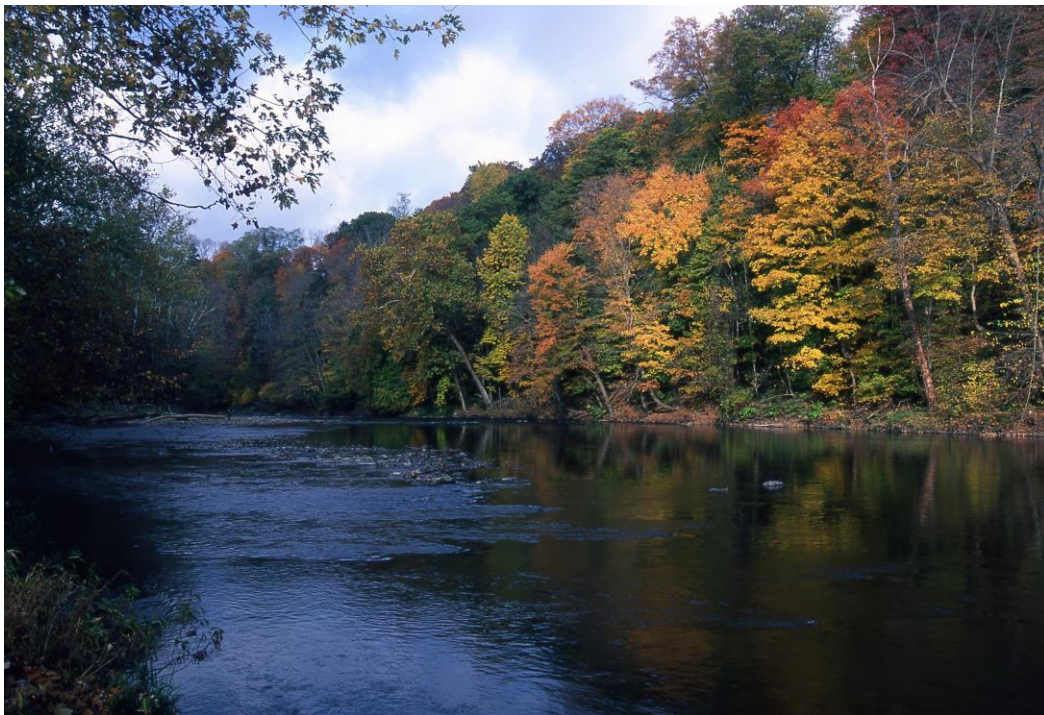
Victory is the specific, measurable achievement that conclusively indicates the Vision is accomplished.

Battles

Battles are the key challenges that will guarantee the Victory and accomplish the Vision.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park Victory

By 2021, the Cuyahoga River is no longer listed as an environmental Area of Concern* and this achievement is celebrated through national and international environmental awards and designations.



*The area from the Gorge Dam pool in Cuyahoga Falls, down to the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland and the adjacent Lake Erie shoreline, is one of 43 *Great Lakes Areas of Concern*. This international legal designation is due to substantial degradation that negatively affects biological communities and the potential for human use.

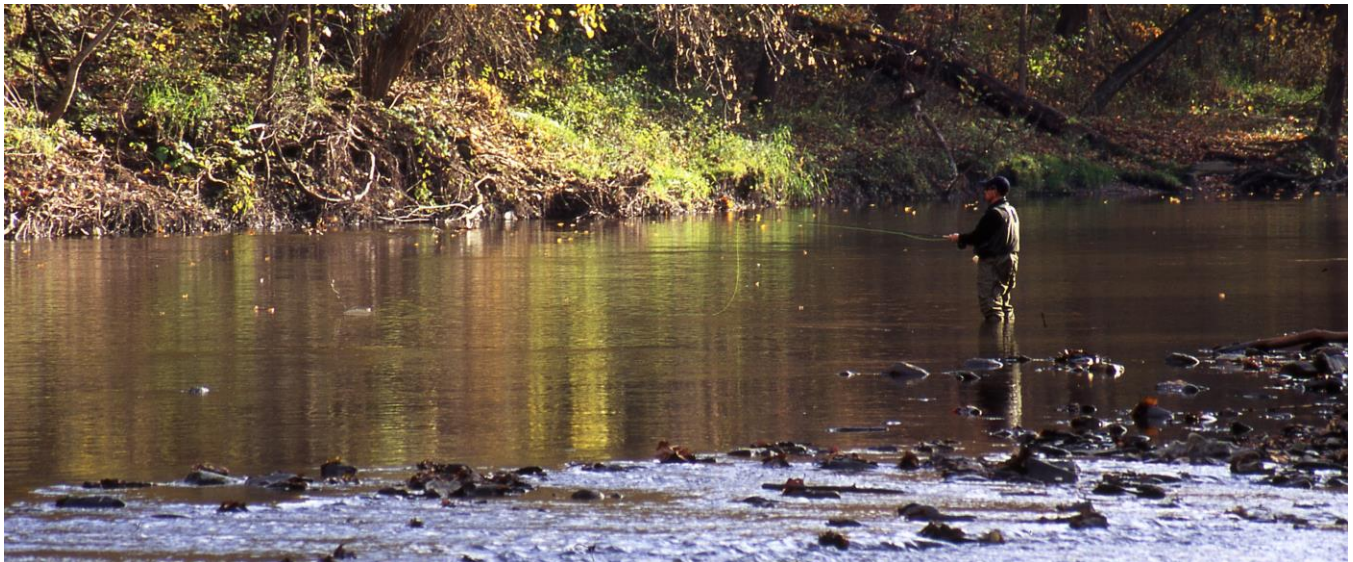
Supporting Victories and Battles

Resource Management

Victory: We achieve delisting of the Cuyahoga River as an Area of Concern and obtain designation as a National Water Trail and National Scenic River.

Battles:

1. Environmental Leadership: We are a catalyst for change by actively working with partners to enhance the river and watershed quality, disseminate information, and promote the health of the river.
2. Restoration: We collaborate with stakeholders to develop plans and implement strategies to improve the resource conditions of the Cuyahoga River Watershed.



Visitor and Resource Protection

Victory: We ensure 70% compliance with our River Safety and Watershed Protection Plan.

Battles:

1. Workload Alignment: We create annual work plans focusing 20% of staff time on our battles.
2. River Safety and Watershed Protection Plan: We write and implement a River Safety and Watershed Protection Plan addressing both river recreation and watershed protection.
3. Skills Development: We are skilled, and are proficient at training others, in river operations and rescue.

Maintenance

Victory: We protect the Cuyahoga River Watershed in the park by decreasing erosion and storm water runoff by 30% through active management of park projects and maintenance operations.

Battles:

1. River Bank Stabilization: We establish a proactive river bank stabilization program using sustainable practices, which preserve and protect the Cuyahoga River Watershed.
2. Sustainable Trails: We fully implement current sustainability standards on all trails through the work of trail crews and park volunteers.
3. Preventative Maintenance: We fully implement a preventative maintenance program that addresses issues with critical systems before they escalate to major impact.
4. Capacity: We reduce the park's total infrastructure footprint by decreasing mowing, and consolidating or removing unused roads, trails, and structures.



Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services

Victory: We share a unified message of the Cuyahoga River and Cuyahoga Valley National Park as symbols of human, urban, and ecosystem renewal across 75% of our educational and interpretive opportunities.

Battles:

1. Messaging: We work collaboratively to create a holistic storyline centered on the Cuyahoga River and its Watershed and integrate river messaging into projects and programs.
2. Capacity: We leverage capacity by working collaboratively in river interpretation and education for collective regional impact.
3. Experience: We increase opportunities to directly experience the Cuyahoga River and its Watershed in Cuyahoga Valley National Park and along the Ohio & Erie Canalway.